

Message Text

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21

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FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 591

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT PP

SUBJ: PROBLEMS WITH BOUGAINVILLE

1. RELATIONS BETWEEN GPNG AND BOUGAINVILLE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY HAVE DETERIORATED SHARPLY. FOURTEEN REPRESENTATIVES FROM BOUGAINVILLE, LED BY DR. ALEXIS SAREI (CHAIRMAN OF PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY AND BOUGAINVILLE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER) ARRIVED IN PORT MORESBY FOR TALKS JUNE 11. THEY BROUGHT WITH THEM TWO DEMANDS COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE TO CENTERL GOVERNMENT: FIRST, THAT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PROVIDE 150 MILLION KINA SO THAT BOUGAINVILLE COULD ESTABLISH ITS OWN SECESSIONIST GOVERNMENT AND, SECOND, THAT NEITHER OF BOUGAINVILLE'S MHA'S (SIR PAUL LAPUN AND DONATUS MOLA) SHOULD SIT ON THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S NEGOTIATING TEAM.

2. WHEN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INSISTED THAT LAPUN AND MOLA SHOULD BE MEMBERS OF THE TEAM, THE BOUGAINVILLE DELEGATION WALKED OUT OF THE JUNE 12 MEETING, NEVER REACHING THE POINT OF DISCUSSING THE 150 MILLION KINA FOR THE SECESSIONIST GOVERNMENT. LATER SAREI ISSUED STATEMENT THAT HE HAD CHALLENGED THE GOVERNMENT TO HOLD BY-ELECTIONS FOR THE SEATS OF LAPUN AND MOLA CLAIMING SUCH ELECTIONS WOULD SHOW THE PEOPLE'S LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THEIR MHA'S.

LEO HANNETT, A MEMBER OF THE BOUGAINVILLE DELEGATION, ISSUED A STATEMENT THAT THE PRESENCE OF LAPUN AND MOLA

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WAS AN INSULT TO THE DIGNITY AND MORAL INTEGRITY OF THE

BOUGAINVILLE PEOPLE.

3. FINANCE MINISTER CHAN WHO LED THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S DELEGATION TOLD ME JUNE 11, JUST BEFORE THE TALKS BEGAN, THAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WAS AT ITS WITS' END IN DEALING WITH BOUGAINVILLE. HE OBVIOUSLY THOUGHT THAT THE BOUGAINVILLE GROUP WAS SO UNREASONABLE IN ITS DEMANDS THAT NO SOLUTION WOULD BE EXPECTED.

4. COMMENT: THIS SITUATION SHOULD BE A MAJOR CRISIS, BUT THERE IS AN AIR OF UNREALITY ABOUT IT ALL. THE DEMAND FOR 150 MILLION KINA TO SET UP A SECESSIONIST GOVERNMENT IS GENERALLY VIEWED AS LUDICROUS. THE AIR OF UNREALITY IS HEIGHTENED BY THE FACT THAT ONE IMPORTANT FIGURE IN THE BOUGAINVILLE GOVERNMENT, MOSES HAVINI, IS IN THE U.S. ON A LEADER GRANT AND, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, HAS NOT BEEN CALLED BACK, AND ANOTHER EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FIGURE, ALEXIS SAREI, IS SCHEDULED TO DEPART FOR THE U.S. ON AN EXTENDED HOLIDAY WITH HIS AMERICAN WIFE ON JULY 9.

5. IT HAS NOW BEEN LEAKED TO THE MEDIA THAT CHEIF MINISTER SOMARE AND FOREIGN MINISTER KIKI WILL MEET WITH THE BOUGAINVILLE GROUP AND LAPUN AND MOLA WILL NOT BE INCLUDED. IF CORRECT, IT WILL BE A SIGNIFICANT BACKDOWN ON THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S PART. BUT IF THIS STEP BRINGS THE BOUGAINVILLE GROUP TO A MORE REASONABLE ATTITUDE, THE SITUATION MAY QUIET DOWN AGAIN.
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